

Simply the Story – Five Step Process www.simplythestory.org

Dr. Larry Dinkins

1. Tell the Story

a. Introduce the story – Study the story in its context noting the context setting, characters, plot and structure. The introduction itself should be brief (3-4 sentences) and is used to orient the listener to where the story falls in the broader context as well as highlight anything that needs clarification.

b. Tell the story – The Bible is closed during the introduction. The actual story begins when you open the Bible and begin with “Now this is the Bible story...” Tell the story in a culturally appropriate way reflecting the passion and drama of the story. Do not try to memorize the text, but internalize the story so you can give it in a oral but biblical accurate fashion. You may briefly lay the Bible down in order to make a point, but at the end of the story you should close the Bible, showing the sacred story is finished.

2. **Retell the Story** – Ask a volunteer to retell the story as best they can for the whole group. . An alternative is to find a partner and retell the story to each other as a pair.

3. **Lead through the story** – During step 3 you may notice that certain elements were left out. Use this step to fill in what was lacking by asking basic Who What Where When and How questions to make sure the listeners are grasping the basic people, events and geography of the story. Note: by this step everyone has heard the story 3-4

4. **Spiritual Observations** - The goal is to design questions that help the listener discover biblical truth or draw conclusions for themselves. These questions highlight how God is working behind the scenes in people’s lives. Our stress is on “what” happened, more than “why” it happened. Why questions tend to result in too much speculation. During this step we will gain insight into the character and actions of both God and people involved.

Circumstances – what is the presenting problem/situation

Characters – who is involved in the story? What do we learn about them (God is always the chief character in every Bible story)

Conversation – what are people saying? What is being their words?

Conduct – what are the people doing? What do their actions reveal?

Choices – both intential/unintential. What choices could have been made?

Consequences – what is the immediate impact of the choice and repercussions?

5. **Spiritual Applications** – In step 4 the emphasis is on how God is working in the lives of people in the Bible story. Now we discover spiritual truths that apply to our lives/ministry today.

Example: Is there anything in the story that surprised or impressed me: actions of God, people or the results of people’s behavior? How do those actions/results apply to today?

1. What are the results of obedience/disobedience in this story?
2. Does anyone change their beliefs, attitudes or behavior? What causes them to change? What might that teach us today?
3. How does God respond to people’s beliefs, feelings, words or actions?
4. How does my understanding of God’s attributes (justice for instance) affect my life today?
5. How does this truth affect my life in my marriage, home, parenting, job, church, community, society?

Simply the Story - Six Step Process (Blind Bartimeus – Mrk 10:46-52)

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1.

a. Introduce the story – Study the story in its context noting the setting, characters, plot and structure. What lessons has Jesus been teaching his disciples in the previous chapter? When does this story take place in the chronology of the life of Christ? What does the phrase “Son of David” refer to? Do a word study on the meaning of “Bar-timaeus”. In v. 51b is Bartimaeus asking to see for the first time or restoration of his sight? Develop a simply outline. Write out a short introduction (4-5 sentences).

b. Tell the story –The goal is to tell the story in a culturally appropriate way reflecting the passion and drama of the story. Do not memorize the text, but internalize the story so you can give it in a oral but biblically accurate fashion. A good story teller will visually “story board” the action and “block out” the movement and vocalization of characters as an actor might do in a play. For Bartimaeus can use a cloak as object lesson. Draw a storyboard with simple stick figures to show the flow of this story. Practice telling this story.

3. **Retell the Story** – Ask a volunteer to retell the story as best they can for the whole group. Be sure to affirm the person who does the retelling. An alternative is to find a partner and retell the story to each other as a pair. You can have the group dramatize the story by simply having the original storyteller retell the story while volunteers pantomime the story (ie. The volunteers do not memorize any dialogue but silently act out the story during the retelling)

4. **Lead through the story** – During step 3 you may notice that certain elements were left out. Use this step to fill in what was lacking by asking basic Who What Where When and How questions to make sure the listeners are grasping the basic people, events and geography of the story. Simply tell part of the story and make a gesture, then pause so the people can answer together. Note: by this step everyone has heard the story 3-4 times. Write out a number of simple “step through” questions.

5. **Spiritual Observations** – Expand on the sad physical/spiritual/emotional condition of Bart... hears “Jesus of Naz.” is passing by but calls out “Son of David”? ... First reaction of crowd contrast with second reaction? Why did he cast off his cloak? ... Strange question Jesus asks Bart...Importance of faith in this healing ... Jesus directions “Go your way...” and now as disciple how he “follows Jesus in the way”.

6. **Spiritual Applications** – Step four should surface key lessons or spiritual principles from the story that can be turned into application points during step five. The questions in this step will help us see how this truth affects my life in my marriage, home, parenting, job, church, community, society, etc. Write out 5-10 application questions based on the lessons/principles that were addressed in step 5 (ie. How are people influenced by crowds, fashion, trends, etc. today? How did Bart’s new focus affect his attitude towards material things (cloak cast off)? Jesus asked Bart, “What can I do for you?” Have group

think of Jesus as the one who is still asking this question today. Have them bow their heads and pray to Jesus, telling Him what they need from Him today.”